

issue at hand. It is of the most serious nature. Gradually, I can tell you, that the gaps are being narrowed between the information we have received and new information, which ought to make it easier for prosecutors to secure convictions.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Time.

SENATOR SCHMIT: I will talk again. Thank you.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Thank you. Senator Wesely.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, members, I'd like to rise also in support of the committee amendments and recognize the good work of the Judiciary Committee, chaired by Senator Chizek, good work of the Franklin Committee, chaired by Senator Schmit, and feel that this Legislature itself, as an institution, as a body, has done excellent work on this very important problem. My hope is that this legislation will pass and will be signed and will become law, and we will see some improvement in the system. Certainly we need to have that. I must admit at this point, however, that I'm certain that we will not solve all the problems. They are so rampant in the current system that our efforts here will go a long way, I think, to helping some of the concerns. But there are so many out there yet to be addressed and we need to keep that in mind. We do have the caseworker bill, LB 720, still pending on Final Reading that would help get the staffing out there to investigate these cases. But once you investigate them, what happens to these individuals and how do we follow up? It is in that area that we have a failure, as well, in the system. I've passed out for you an article that I hope you had a chance to read, and, if you haven't, you'll look at. It's a July 2, 1989, article. In one of the...on the box on that front page of that handout it talks about a 16-year-old girl and what's happened to her in the system as she came forward and exposed a boyfriend living with her mother who had abused her, and went into the system and talked about the abuse. And, unfortunately, the system did not believe her, and ended up sending her back into that home and into that abusive situation. It's a horrible story, but it's a story repeated time and again in this state, of young children abused and not protected by our society, not protected by our system, sent back into horrible circumstances which they fled from and did not find the protection that they so richly deserved. And instead of having these individuals perpetrating this abuse, prosecuted, punished, we have the victims, the